

NATIONAL SLAVERY AND NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

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16.

SPEECH  
OF  
HON. FRANCIS GILLETTE,  
OF CONNECTICUT,  
IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

FEBRUARY 23d, 1855.

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"We present to the World the sorry spectacle of a Nation, that worships Slavery as a household goddess, after having constituted Liberty the presiding divinity over Church and State."—*Henry Clay*.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.  
BUELL & BLANCHARD, PRINTERS.  
1855.

## SPEECH OF MR. GILLETTE.

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Mr. President: I regret the necessity of trespassing upon the patience of the Senate at this late hour of the session; but since Connecticut has been made to lead off in this new onset for the supremacy of Slavery by my colleague, who reported the bill before us, I feel myself called upon to represent what I think to be her true sentiments, and vindicate her good name from dishonor. I am free to say, sir, that no other State in this Union more deeply abhors the Fugitive Act of 1850 than Connecticut; and to no other State could this bill, being intended as a sequel to that act, be more distasteful and odious.

Sir, it affords me no pleasure to appear before the Senate on any question which may not be agreeable to some Senators. It would be less ungenial to my taste and feelings, either to sit in silence, or to confine myself exclusively to such subjects as commend themselves to the favorable consideration of all. But when propositions are thrust upon our attention which I cannot approve; or when injustice stalks before us in its most appalling forms, trampling humanity in the dust, I have no option but to oppose them at whatever hazard; and can only say, in self-justification, with a great statesman and orator of antiquity, when about to urge an unpopular measure before an Athenian assembly, that "while I am not so perverse as to study to give offense where no good purpose can be answered by it, my opinion is, that every honest speaker should prefer the interests of the State to the admiration and applause of his hearers."

In the discursiveness of this debate, the Senator from Louisiana [Mr. BENJAMIN] has charged the North with aggressiveness upon the South. He represented the South as the aggrieved and outraged party, always suffering in her rights from the encroachments of the North, and always acting in defense of her peculiar institution from the assaults of Freedom. Such was the burden of much of his eloquent speech. Now, sir, I believe this to be as contrary to the whole history of this Government, as opposed to our own observation. The Senator from Ohio [Mr. WADE] has called our attention to some facts of recent date, to show the fallacy of the idea which the Senator from Louisiana advanced, and I wish to call his attention, and that of the Senate, to certain other facts of a prior date, to show the error

into which he has fallen. If I do not greatly mistake, the declaration is true which was made by the Hon. Caleb Cushing, now the Attorney General of the United States, in a letter addressed, in the year 1838, to certain citizens of Massachusetts, in which he says:

"In its industrial, financial, and political relations, Slavery is at the bottom of all the action of Congress." \* \* \* "It is that thing which pervades, colors, and controls, by its unpronounced, but ever-present influence, all the measures and operations of the Government."

Now, Mr. President, I believe this to be true literally, historically, humiliatingly true. And in proof of this, I would first call the attention of the Senate to the action of the Federal Government in relation to the District in which we are assembled. Let us begin here. This Government has enacted laws over the National District which are a violation of every principle of Freedom and justice, for the existence of which my constituents are held equally responsible with those of the Senator from Louisiana, and which involve every State in this Union in a fearful responsibility—laws which are the sublimation of injustice, barbarity, and despotism, and which, according to Jefferson, impose "a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose."

By the enactment and authority of the United States, one portion of the people of this District hold another portion as property, as chattels, to be worked without wages, to be scourged without remedy, and sold without redress.

Laws are in force here, by the enactment and authority of the United States, which authorize and permit some hundreds of children, annually born in this District, to be snatched, "while yet the seal of Heaven is fresh upon them," out of that condition of natural liberty which our fathers truly asserted to be the birthright of every human being, and doomed to life-long Slavery; children, which, from their very helplessness, cannot be supposed guilty of any crime, nor for the alleged reason that their mothers (not to speak of their fathers) are criminal. According to the Constitution, the children of the blackest culprits even cannot be attained. What, then, can be said of the infliction of the severest pun-

ishment upon the innocent children of innocent mothers, even the doom of Slavery for life? Said Governor Giles, of Virginia—

“Slavery must be admitted to be a punishment of the highest order, and it ought to be applied only to crimes of the highest order.”

Yet the Government of the United States dooms innocent men, women, and children, to a punishment of the highest order.

By the authority of the United States, a part of the population of this District are doomed to the profoundest ignorance, absolutely stultified, and then, if the poor darkened wretch, the eyes of whose mind have thus been put out, and the chambers of whose soul have been filled with darkness, should violate a certain law which he was thus forbidden to read and understand, he is condemned to have his right hand cut off, to be hung in the usual manner, to be beheaded and quartered, and have each fragment of his mangled body hung up in the most conspicuous places in the District. And although, as I am informed, and am happy to believe, this Draconic enactmen has not been executed here for many years, I do not understand how a Court could evade the infliction of it, upon a conviction of either of the crimes of which it is the penalty, without a renunciation of the lower law dogma.

By another law in force here, by the enactment and authority of the United States, if any person of the proscribed class breaks into a shop, storehouse, or warehouse, *not* contiguous to, or used with, any mansion-house, and steal from thence any goods to the value of five shillings, such offender, on conviction, shall suffer death without benefit of clergy. Yes, sir, death for stealing the value of five shillings, when Slavery itself is the master-theft of earth, teaching theft as its first, rudimental, and practical lesson—plundering not simply five shillings from the pocket of a man, but clutching the man himself, body, soul, pocket, shillings, all, and devoting them upon its execrable altar! Death for stealing five shillings, notwithstanding the Constitution forbids the infliction of cruel and unusual punishments!

By another law in force here, by the enactment and authority of the United States, if a person belonging to a certain class, whether man or woman, presumes to strike a person of another class, whether in self-defense against a drunken ruffian or an adulterous villain, or under any provocation whatever, on conviction, by the oath of the person struck, he or she shall be maimed by having an ear cut off, “cropt,” as the law has it.

By another law in force here, by the enactment and authority of the United States, if a person belonging to a certain class goes out into the woods and shoots a hog, and refuses to return on the demand of a person of another class, it is lawful to shoot, kill, and destroy such person.

By another law in force here, by the enactment and authority of the United States, any person of the proscribed class, who shall give false testimony against any other person of his own class, shall have one ear cut off on the day of his or her conviction, and receive thirty-nine stripes on his or her bare back; and the next day the other ear

shall be cropped, and the like number of stripes given the offender.

It is note-worthy, in passing, that the number of lashes generally meted out to the slave, by slave-law, is thirty-nine. Why this precise number should be designated, it is not easy to understand, unless it was suggested by the “forty stripes save one,” which St. Paul tells us he received five times from the Jews, and adopted in the hope of canonizing the so-called “patriarchal institution” into the higher sanctity of apostolic sainthood.

By another law in force here, by the enactment and authority of the United States, any colored person, free or bond, coming into the National District, is liable to be seized and imprisoned as a fugitive from Slavery; and if unable, in that helpless and forlorn situation, to pay all fees and rewards given by law for apprehending runaways, is liable to be sold into Slavery for life to the highest bidder; and, to crown the atrocity, the price of blood—“the money or tobacco,” as the law reads—shall go into the pockets of the marshal himself—the judge in the case—as imprisonment fees, except what may be needed to pay for the arrest of the victim—thus holding out a bribe to the marshal to adjudge him to Slavery. Under this law, several persons, according to the reports of the marshals, not having been claimed as slaves, and therefore presumed to be free, have been sold into Slavery for life. Thus the Government sells its own citizens into Slavery, as cannibals sometimes eat their own children.

By the connivance, if not by the positive enactment of Congress, a traffic is here carried on in human beings. Advertisements of sales flare in the newspapers of the District with cold-blooded effrontery; and men, women, and children, are bought and sold here, around this Capitol, as brute beasts. I am aware that, by one of the famous compromises of 1850, the bringing of slaves for sale into the District is forbidden, under penalty of the forfeiture of such imported slaves; but I have been unable to learn that any efficient steps have been taken to execute the law; and it is believed that, by concealment and fraud, the traffic is still carried on here to some extent, though the great slave-barracoon, used by the brokers in human flesh residing in the Capital, is just across the Potomac. Soon after arriving in this city last May, I noticed in the Organ of the Administration an advertisement of a whole family, consisting of five or six members, to be sold at auction, in front of the City Hall; and during the present session of Congress I have seen persons advertised for sale in the fair-seeming *Intelligence*, “without restriction,” in violation of a provision of the compromise of 1850.

By the authority of the United States, if a person of the proscribed class shall fly any kite or kites within the limits of the Corporation of Georgetown, he shall be fined, or flogged, at the discretion of the Mayor.

By the authority of the United States, the free colored inhabitants of this city are taxed annually from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars, to support its white poor, to sustain the schools for the education of its white children, and for all the

other municipal expenses of the District; while, at the same time, they are precluded from any participation in the benefits of what they are thus compelled to pay, being left alone and unaided by their *chivalrous* exactors, to feed their own poor, to sustain their own schools, and bear all their other burdens as best they can. Language, sir, is too poor to characterize such extortion.

By the authority of the United States, there appeared in this city, a few days since, under the meridian sun, a human shape on horseback, dragging a woman by a rope around her body through its muddy streets. With unblushing face, and head erect, gloating over his victim with a spider-like exultation, this gallant son of "the chivalry" ascended the hill on which we are assembled, with his human prey, and passed by under the very shadow of the Capitol, over which at that moment your national flag was proudly floating as the ensign of Freedom. Oh, sir, "the model Republic!" "The model Republic!" The great slave-monger, the great slave-market, the great slavery-propaganda of the nineteenth century, around whose Capitol men are bought and sold like oxen, and woman is hunted and led, as savages hunt and lead buffaloes by the lasso!

Mr. DAWSON. As chairman of the Committee on the District of Columbia, I will only take occasion here to say to the Senator from Connecticut, that those laws are not in force in this District, any more than the old laws of the State of Connecticut against witchcraft, and the laws made at New Haven against violating the Sabbath. No such laws, I believe, were ever passed by Congress. Even if they were, they are no more in force than the Blue Laws of the Senator's own State. What is the object of the course of the Senator, but to excite prejudices against the District of Columbia, and against the character of our country and its institutions? I submit to the Senator himself, whether it would not be well to refrain from such a course of remark.

Mr. GILLETTE. I have in my hand (holding up the book) these laws of which I have made an abstract. I have the code here entitled "the Black Code of the District of Columbia." The gentleman can look at it.

Mr. RUSK. I wish to ask the honorable Senator where that code was printed. The book looks like a very small one to contain a code of laws.

Mr. GILLETTE. It was published in New York.

Mr. RUSK. Just where I expected. [Laughter.]

Mr. GILLETTE. These laws are found in the statutes of Maryland; I have seen them there myself; they were enacted into *United States' laws* by Congress in 1790, and they have never been repealed. Every slave in this District is held under these and other similar laws, or else he is not held under any laws at all.

Mr. RUSK. New York is very kind, to print the statutes of Maryland.

Mr. GILLETTE. Mr. President—

Mr. JONES, of Tennessee. The Senator will allow me, I am sure, before he proceeds, to vindicate the truth of history.

Mr. GILLETTE. Certainly.

Mr. JONES, of Tennessee. The "Black Code" from which the Senator has been quoting, and on which he has made his speech, is a New York work, "by Worthington G. Snethen, Counsellor-at-Law; published for the A. and F. Anti-Slavery Society, by William Harned, 61 John street." That is the titlepage of the book. I merely wish the authority for the Senator's statements to go out with his speech.

Mr. GILLETTE. I ask the Senator from Tennessee whether in his State the authority of an author is discredited, from the fact that his work is not issued by a publishing House in Tennessee? Does he question the validity of the United States' laws, because they are published in Boston, and not in Tennessee?

Mr. JONES, of Tennessee. Not at all; but with me, the fact that anything on the subject of Slavery comes from an Abolition source, is enough to make me regard it as questionable. If it is published by an Anti-Slavery society, it is pretty sure to be a slander on the South and on the country.

Mr. GILLETTE. The honorable Senator, I think, has given the very profoundest reason he can for his disbelief, with a characteristic courtesy.

Mr. MALLORY. I trust the Senator from Connecticut will be suffered to go on, and not be interrupted. The statements which he has been making can certainly do no harm in the country; if wrong, they can be corrected.

Mr. RUSK. I feel great interest though, if the Senator will allow me to say a word, to know the name of that thing, in the shape of a man, who was seen dragging a woman with a rope tied around her body. As a matter of curiosity, I should like also the time when it occurred.

Mr. GILLETTE. In reply to the Senator from Texas, I will say, that I am not informed as to the name of the "thing." It passed this Capitol about one o'clock, P. M.—

Mr. JONES, of Tennessee. When? To-day?

Mr. GILLETTE. On Monday of last week.

Mr. RUSK. Did the Senator see it?

Mr. GILLETTE. No, sir; but I have the testimony of several persons who did see it.

Mr. RUSK. Will the Senator name who they are?

Mr. GILLETTE. If essential, I could name the persons. They were ladies at the boarding house where I lodge. One of them, the wife of a Senator; two others, the wife and daughter of a Representative; and a fourth, the sister of another Representative.

Mr. RUSK. Then I understand the Senator did not see it himself?

Mr. GILLETTE. I never pretended that I myself saw it.

Mr. RUSK. I am glad of that, for I believe the Senator would have chivalry enough to stop such a thing if he should see it; and I would help him in doing so.

• Mr. GILLETTE. I am glad to have escaped such a spectacle.

Mr. BUTLER, (to Mr. GILLETTE.) What would you have done if you had seen it?

Mr. GILLETTE. I would have called the attention of the Senator from South Carolina to the scene, as a specimen of his "patriarchal institution," as it exists in the Federal District, and under the authority and laws of this Federal Government. I mentioned it by way of illustration of the subject in hand.

Mr. BUTLER. I know what I would have done.

Mr. GILLETTE. Now, Mr. President, is it pertinent to inquire, by what authority did the Congress of the United States, acting under a Constitution ordained, among other purposes, "to establish justice"—aye, sir, *to establish justice*—and "secure the blessings of liberty," enact the consummate injustice of earth, and the outrage upon liberty, of striking down thousands of persons in this District to the degradation of chattelhood? In what article, section, or clause, of the Constitution, is the tremendous power given to this Government to make a man a slave, to snatch from him the crown and jewels of his immortal nature, and load him with chains? We look in vain for any power therein given to Congress to chattelize a part of the people, and throw them, despoiled and helpless, into the hands of another class, to be used as property, "to all intents, constructions, and purposes, whatsoever," in the language of slave law.

Such legislation is no less a violation of the Constitution than an outrage upon humanity. It is an arrant usurpation of power, such as few, if any, Eastern despots could safely commit. By the Constitution, Congress has no more power to make a slave than a lord; no more authority to rob a man of his liberty than of his life; no more warrant to legalize Slavery than piracy. The Constitution forbids the granting of any title of nobility—does it then authorize the granting of a title of ignobility, even the ignominy of Slavery, and invest one man, with whip and spurs, to ride another man whithersoever he listeth, by the grace of this Government? We find no warrant in the Constitution for thus dividing society into distinct castes more odious than any to be found in the Old World—into slaves and slaveholders, menials and masters, bondsmen and freemen, vassals and tyrants, victims and victimizers.

It can hardly be necessary for me to say, that the Constitution, based, as it is, on the great principle of the national declaration, the exact equality of all men by nature in political rights, so far from countenancing "the wild and guilty fantasy that man can hold property in man," nowhere recognizes the principle of Slavery in any such sense as to authorize, support, and countenance it; but on the contrary, if faithfully executed, Slavery could not exist another hour anywhere under its exclusive jurisdiction. Instead of its shield, it would prove its sword; instead of its refuge, its hot avenger. The Constitution, while its declared objects, in part, are "to establish justice," and "secure the blessings of liberty," expressly provides that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law;" that "the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and

seizures, shall not be violated;" and that "the privilege of the writ of *Habeas Corpus* shall not be suspended, unless when in cases of rebellion or invasion the public safety may require it." Slavery, as it is well understood, deprives persons of life, liberty, and property, not by due process of law, but by the summary process of force; it annuls the right of people to be secure from unreasonable searches and seizures, by breaking open the very sanctuary of private rights, searching and seizing, not only property, but *persons*, and dragging them forth as booty, to be worked, whipped, and sold in the human flesh markets. It suspends, in effect, the writ of *Habeas Corpus*, the great bulwark of liberty, in relation to persons not guilty of invasion or rebellion, but "guilty of a skin not colored like our own," and not even of that, in many cases, but of a "pure white" complexion—the negro Anglo-Saxonized.

[Here the speaker gave way, by request, for a motion to adjourn; but after a long struggle it failed, and he proceeded.]

I am very sorry, Mr. President, to tax the patience of the Senate, but at the same time I am not responsible for the introduction of this subject into the Senate, and therefore I shall proceed with what I have to say.

The Constitution expressly prohibits the passage of any bill of attainder, yet Slavery defiantly attaints persons of African descent to such a degree, that the purest anglo-Saxon blood of the "first families" has but little power to bleach out the taint, and work an absolution. The experiment has been in progress in this country for more than two hundred years, under the cunning and conservative principle, *partus sequitur ventrem*; and still it is found that it requires not less than fifteen-sixteenths of the purest Caucasian blood to remove the attainer, and restore the attainted to the rights and dignity of manhood. In the early history of the country, three-fourths' parts of white blood entitled the slave to freedom, and he became, in virtue thereof, a white man; but, owing since to the rapid fading of the slave's complexion, it has been thought necessary and profitable, practically, to dispense with color altogether as an index of Slavery, and make it depend—not on *paternal*, no, no—but on *maternal* descent. Such is the fact in this District. Persons are held here in Slavery, at this moment, as white as the whitest Senator on this floor.

I am aware that, in years past, when the free States, through their Legislatures and otherwise, have invoked Congress to abolish Slavery in the Federal District, it has been the policy of its defenders to take refuge behind the States which ceded the District, and cast the responsibility upon them, but, in my opinion, without any shadow of a reason. Let us examine this subterfuge for a moment. The slave-laws of the District, no one will deny, were enacted by the Congress of the United States, approved by the President of the United States, and they are enforced by the authority of the United States, in a District over which Congress has "exclusive jurisdiction, in all cases whatsoever," by the Constitution of the United States. Because

Maryland may have had such laws at the time of the cession of that part of the District now remaining to the United States, so far from making that State responsible for their existence here, it only shows that Congress copied those laws from her statutes, and adopted them as its own. Supposing, if it were possible, Congress had derived those laws from the customs of some barbarous tribes, would that act have inculcated those barbarians, and exonerated Congress and the United States from the responsibility of their enactment and existence here? No man could entertain so preposterous an idea for a moment.

By the constitutional provision anticipating the cession of the District, the jurisdiction of the United States is unconditional and complete, without anything implied or understood. Neither Maryland nor any other State asked to exercise co-ordinate jurisdiction over the District, and dictate its legislation. Had such a demand been made, the answer would have been found in the Constitution, vesting in Congress the right to "exercise exclusive legislation, in all cases whatsoever, over such District;" thus inhibiting Congress from becoming a party to any such stipulation. Says Madison, in the forty-third number of the *Federalist*:

"The indispensable necessity of complete authority at the seat of Government carries its own evidence with it."

The absurdity of the pretence of an implied obligation to Maryland, or to any other State, to maintain Slavery in the Federal District, according to the pleasure of such State, may be thus exposed: Supposing a landholder should make an absolute conveyance of a farm, with an unsightly and pestilential marsh upon it, and when the owner proposed to drain and reclaim it, his neighbors should tell him of an *implied* obligation to do no such thing, inasmuch as the grantor has a similar swamp, of vastly greater size, on his remaining lands, and there are many such on the surrounding farms, all of which would appear the more unsightly and repulsive by the contrast, and the whole neighborhood be exposed to a partially purified and healthful atmosphere. The utter baselessness of such a pretension is obvious. Is it any the less preposterous to say, that inasmuch as Maryland had Slavery when she ceded the District to the United States, there was an implied obligation on the part of the latter, never, without her consent, to abate the nuisance within the District, to drain the pestiferous marsh, because her own Slavery might appear all the more odious from the contrast with Liberty here, and not only herself, but all slavery would be in danger from Freedom?

Congress is responsible to all the States, and to the people of the States, for its legislation here, and not to Maryland solely, else the National is subordinate to a State authority, and is incompetent to fulfill its great designs. Congress has the same authority to abolish Slavery in the Federal District, that Maryland, or any other slave State, has to abolish it within her limits; and to assume that the only legislative power in the District is incompetent to do away the evil here, is tantamount to saying that it cannot re-

peal the laws of its own enacting, within its own exclusive jurisdiction, which is contemptibly absurd. If a lunatic Congress should frantically assume to legalize robbery in the District, could not a subsequent Congress, restored to reason, blot out the barbarous enactment, and make restitution to the victims? Clearly, then, Congress, having enacted laws by which men are held in Slavery in this District, can hasten to their relief, knock off their chains, and restore to them their plundered rights, their long-lost manhood.

The Jeffersonian Ordinance of 1787, abolishing and prohibiting Slavery within the Northwestern Territory, was ratified by the unanimous vote of the first Congress under the Constitution. Supposing some member from Virginia had arisen there and objected, on the ground that, inasmuch as Virginia had ceded that Territory to the United States, there was a tacit and implied understanding that Congress would not abolish Slavery therein, without the consent of Virginia—he would have been challenged to produce the proof, and, failing, would have been justly regarded as more zealous for Slavery than wise for Freedom.

But, Mr. President, I deem it unnecessary to pursue the argument farther on this point, since the power of Congress over Slavery in the District has been admitted by the highest authorities in the country; and, in 1850, conceded by Congress itself, by the passing of a law prohibiting the importation of slaves into the District, for sale. If Congress can abolish the slave-market here, can it not strike another blow at the root of the complicated wrong, and abolish Slavery itself? If it can forbid the traffic in men, can it not forbid the enslavement of men, by repealing the laws of its own enactment, which make men slaves? If Congress is competent to declare every slave brought into the District for sale, free, is it not competent also to declare every slave already in the District free? Thus, sir, the whole question has been conceded and settled incontrovertibly.

The maintenance of Slavery in the Federal District, by the *authority of the United States*, exerts a conservative influence over the institution in the States, by clothing it with the countenance and sanction of the nation. The District of Columbia is thus made the citadel of American Slavery, its munition of defense; or, as the late Mr. Calhoun once said, "the very key of Slavery." Its existence here, under the attendant circumstances, involves the whole nation in all its responsibilities and infamy, from which Connecticut and other free States have repeatedly and earnestly implored Congress to relieve them, and cast from their shoulders the ignominious load. Petitions for this object now lie on your table, sir; and but a few days ago, the sovereign State of Michigan, through her noble Legislature, spoke to us in relation to this and other kindred abuses, in a voice so clear and thrilling, that none but squatter sovereigns, clamorous for "popular sovereignty," can disobey.

As a Senator on this floor, I do not speak of Slavery within the States; but must leave them, I suppose, to hug the monster to their breasts, until, like the stolen fox which the Spartan boy con-

cealed under his tunic to hide the theft, it shall eat and gnaw into their vitals. If all that modern discovery has revealed concerning it be true, and the institution is, as asserted, beneficent in its character, tending to civilization, purity, liberty, education, physical prosperity, and social advancement; or if, as I think, the reverse of all this is true, and its tendencies are toward barbarism, debauchery, despotism, ignorance, material decay, and social demoralization, we of Connecticut and of the other free States do not desire to participate in either its blessings or its curses, but to be exempted from any responsibility therefor. As citizens of the free States, we ask especially that this District may be purified with a thorough lustration, so that the Capital of the nation, which should reflect the national honor, shall cease to be trodden by a slave, and the national flag no longer protect Slavery and the slave-trade under its folds. We ask to be released from the infamy of the traffic in men, women, and children, which is often heralded through the city papers, to take place almost under the shadow of the Capitol. Let this foul blot be wiped off from our national escutcheon. Let the city bearing the honored name of the Father of his Country be cleansed of the rank offense, and made a fit dwelling-place for the ark of our liberties. Let American citizens, when they visit the Capital of their country, no longer have occasion to take up the indignant lamentation of the poet :

"Who can with patience for a moment see,  
This medley mass of pride and misery,  
Of whips and charters, manacles and rights,  
Of slaving blacks and democratic whites?  
To think that man, then just and righteous God!  
Should stand before Thee with a tyrant's rod,  
O'er creatures like himself—with souls from Thee,  
And yet to boast of perfect liberty!"

We demand the abolition of Slavery in the national District, not only as an act of justice to the enslaved and to the free States which have been treacherously implicated therein, but also as one of the reformatory measures necessary to the vindication of our national character before the world. Everywhere the cause of republican government is sadly disparaged and stigmatized by our inconsistency and treachery. American liberty is understood abroad to mean the liberty to oppress, the liberty to enslave, the liberty to imbrute our fellow-men; and one foreign writer has even suggested that our national emblem should be made truly emblematic of our real character, by picturing the eagle with liberty on his wings, and with a negro chained and writhing in his talons, and his heart's blood dripping from his beak. American Democracy is looked upon as a huge, one-eyed, gigantic monster—a modern Polyphemus—sporting the cap of liberty on his head, and mouthing the psalms of freedom on his tongue, while he stalks ruthlessly over men, and treads them down as worms. He is sometimes depicted in foreign cities, according to the reports of American travelers, standing erect upon the human auction block, in the act of selling men, women, and children, to the highest bidders; again, with coat off and arms bare, whipping nude-backed women; and again, with rifle and hounds, chasing a flying fugitive slave over mountain and

moor, whose only crime is, that, like Washington, he loves liberty too well.

Said Lafayette, a few years before his death :

"While I am indulging in my views of American prospects and American liberty, it is mortifying to be told that in that very country a large portion of the people are slaves. It is a dark spot on the face of the nation."

At another time, he said, that had he foreseen the result, he never would have unsheathed his sword in behalf of a country of tyrants and slaves.

Says E. S. Abdy, in his book entitled "A Residence and Tour in the United States:"

"A view of the national sin of America, after admiring the natural grandeur of the country, is like discovering the object of worship in the old temples of Egypt, where, after the stranger had walked bewildered through vistas of superb architecture, he came at last to the filthy idol—a mouthing and obscene ape, playing its pranks on a throne of gold! And this is the thing to be worshiped in America; a mockery and disgrace of the human character enthroned in the West; a nation of slave-drivers, masquerading it with the cap of liberty; a Christian people surpassing all the heathen tribes of the world in systematic wickedness; a free Republic practicing greater oppression than was ever heard of in the old king-scourged and priest-ridden despotisms of Europe."

Says an Edinburgh Reviewer, in an article on "Travelers in America:"

"Every American who loves his country should dedicate his whole life and every faculty of his soul to efface the foul blot of Slavery from its character. If nations rank according to their wisdom and virtue, what right has the American, a scourger and murderer of slaves, to compare himself with the least and lowest of the European nations, much less with this great and humane country, where the greatest lord dare not lay a finger on the meanest peasant? What is Freedom where all are not free, where the greatest of God's blessings is limited, by impious caprice, to the color of the body? And these are the men who taunt the English with their corrupt Parliament, with their buying and selling votes! Let the world judge which is the more liable to censure—we who, in the midst of rottenness have torn the manacles off slaves all over the world, or they, who, with their idle purity and useless perfection, have remained mute and careless, while groans have echoed and whips cracked around the very walls of their spotless Congress. We wish well to America; we rejoice in her prosperity, and are delighted to resist the absurd impertinence with which the character of her people is often treated in this country. But the existence of Slavery there is an atrocious crime, with which no measures can be kept; for which her situation affords no sort of an apology; which makes Liberty itself distrusted, and the boast of it disgusting."

I have cited these passages, not that they can afford any satisfaction to national pride or patriotism—they certainly afford me none—but because they are truthful, and teach us in what estimu-

tion we are held abroad, on account of our slaveholding. Every true American, every real patriot, must feel deeply for the honor of his country, and lament the dark plague-spot which has brought upon it the keen reproaches and scorn of an enlightened universe. Oh, sir, this fair temple of Freedom, with the demon of Slavery as the presiding divinity enthroned within; this magnificent altar of liberty, with human victims for the sacrifice; this asylum for the oppressed of all other lands, and the cruel grave of the rights and liberties of millions of our own land! Justice, humanity, liberty, patriotism, all implore us to banish Slavery from the national Capital, and everywhere to absolve the Federal Government from its guilty complicity with the system. They call upon us to denationalize it, and disabuse the national character of the horrible infamy which burns and blackens upon its escutcheon, from the perversion of the freest and best Government on earth, ordained for the protection of human rights, into a tremendous engine for their destruction. Have we become so callous, so reckless, so lost to a proper self-regard, and "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind," as to madly persist in trampling upon the great and vital principles of our own Government, and in offering hecatombs of men upon the altar of American liberty? Shall we wait for the avenger of blood to teach us the awful lesson affirmed by all history, that national calamities and ruin are the sure and inevitable consequences of national injustice and crime?

Mr. President: here I might pause; but it may not be amiss to glance at the subsequent policy of a Government which signalized its inauguration by re-establishing Slavery in the metropolis of the nation, and expose its profligacy in pandering to the vilest despotism beneath the sun. Although the Constitution of the United States makes no distinction on account of complexion, and admits no right or disqualification therefor, its administrators have taken it upon themselves, as an utter violation of its letter and spirit, to proscribe all whiteless persons, and legislate them out of the pale of its protection. Never has a Government been guilty of a more audacious usurpation of power, or a grosser violation of constitutional prerogative. Let us glance at the proscriptive crusade of the Federal Government against a part of the people of this country. Its first act in this direction, as we have seen, after the adoption of the Constitution, was the enactment of the whole slave-code, and the reinstitution and perpetuation of Slavery in the Federal District.

In 1790, Congress passed an act of naturalization, by which any alien, being a *white* person, may be admitted to the rights of citizenship; thus proscribing all aliens, however worthy, on whom, on whose ancestors, the sun may have shone little too vertically, and, at the same time, rejecting any and all other persons, however immoral and debased. Marvelous statesmanship, that thus to open the door wide to ship-loads of white paupers and criminals from the Old World, and bolt it fast against colored foreigners, though

ennobled by all the virtues and excellences that can adorn human nature!

In 1792, Congress passed an act to organize the militia of the United States, which provided for the enrollment of none but free, able-bodied, *white* citizens, although the fact was then fresh in the knowledge of Congress and the country, that no class of soldiers had fought more heroically, or done more, proportionally, to achieve the liberties of the country in the revolutionary conflict, than the very class thus proscribed. And it should be added, in justice to them, thus cut off from the privilege of participating in the defense of their country—a privilege denied by no other Government on earth to its subjects—that they came forward as volunteers in the second war with Great Britain, and, by their patriotic devotion and soldierly exploits, won from the lips of their commanders the highest meed of praise. Their patriotism and valor rose superior to the injustice and contumely of their persecutors.

In the year 1810, Congress again thrust at the dark-complexioned people of the country, by enacting that "no other than a free *white* person shall be employed in carrying the mails of the United States, either as a post-rider or driver of a carriage." Any other person, of whatever character, may carry the mail; but a *native* American, of unsullied character and virtuous aims, unexceptionable for probity and trustworthiness, if his complexion chances to be a little dusky, is proscribed as unfit to drive the horses which draw the mail-bags of the country.

The Federal Government has disfranchised the colored men of the District of Columbia, and left them to be plundered of their money, under the specious name of taxes, in the disbursement of which they have no voice, and no direct benefit—thus holding to their lips the same bitter chalice of oppression which our Revolutionary Fathers dashed from theirs with indignant scorn. Taxation without representation they could not endure—but this Government has inflicted the same intolerable wrong upon the colored man.

By the laws of this Government, free colored persons are precluded from the advantages of some, if not all, the Territories of the United States, they being opened to none but "*free white* persons." A dark complexion is thought incompatible with a settlement in the wilds of the West.

Thus, sir, has the Federal Government warred upon a part of the people—it has pursued them to the utmost extremity; it has legislated them down, and frowned them down, and trampled them down, with an arbitrariness and cruelty well illustrated by the Procrustean bedstead of antiquity, on which men were laid and made to fit—those too short were stretched, and those too long were cut to its length. Wherein is the difference between this barbarity, and that of cutting and graduating human rights by the hue of the skin? They are alike arbitrary, unjust, and tyrannical. Men are no more responsible for their color than for their stature, and to make their rights depend on any such accident of birth, or climate, is the baldest despotism—as absurd as impious.



And yet the friends and abettors of this inhuman policy, with an air of great self-complacency, tell us that the colored people are an "inferior and degraded race." Then why not have the justice and magnanimity to remove their civil disabilities, and let them rise, and no longer exhibit toward them the dastardliness of an overgrown bully, who pounces upon the weak and defenseless? Their alleged inferiority should entitle them to the protection of their superiors, rather than to their destruction. Ill does it become the cruel inflictors of all their wrongs to speak of their inferiority, ignorance, and debasement. Inferior, sir! Who has made them inferior? Ignorant! Who has doomed them to ignorance? Debased! Who has sunken them in debasement? They, be it understood, who have brought all the sanctions of law and custom to crush them; who have snatched from them the key of knowledge, and closed every avenue to their elevation and advancement. Put out the eyes of men, and then tell them scornfully that they are blind! Extinguish the Promethean fire in their souls, and then tell them tauntingly that they are darkened and debased! It is the crowning villany of tyrants that they visit their own crimes upon their victims, and thus seek to hide their own guilt under the wrongs which they inflict. Alledge not the depressed condition of your colored brother, whom you have sold into Egypt, as an excuse for your cold-blooded treachery. As well might the hawk taunt the dove in his talons, because he does not fly away to the azure heavens; or the wolf upbraid the lamb in his clutches, because he does not skip and play. Rather does it become you to lay your hand on your mouth, and your mouth in the dust, and cry unclean! unclean!

Sir, what would be thought of the father who should depress and degrade one part of his family, and permit another portion to trample upon the victims of his unnatural cruelty and injustice? He would be pronounced a miscreant, or a lunatic. And is not this equally true of the larger family of the State? What shall be said of that kind of statesmanship which treats one class of people with scorn and contumely, thus alienating their affections from the State, and filling their bosoms with hate and revenge; forcing upon them the maddening conviction that they are despised aliens and outcasts in their own country, with nothing to dread but peace, and something to hope from revolution? It is a dangerous and infatuated policy which, at some national crisis, might bring resultant disaster and ruin. The grand aim of all just Governments and all wise legislation is, not to depress, but to elevate; not to degrade, but to ennoble; not to curse, but to bless every class and condition of people, and thus, while fulfilling their appropriate functions, conciliate the patriotic regards of all, and fortify the State with a circling rampart of true, devoted, loyal hearts. Well did Jefferson wax warm on this point, and exclaim:

"With what execration should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one half of the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into

enemies; destroys the morals of the one part, and the patriotism of the other. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God, and not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situations, is among possible events—that it may become probable by supernatural interference. The Almighty has no attribute that can take side with us in such a contest."

But, Mr. President, there is still another chapter in the history of the prostitution of the Federal Government to the purposes of Slavery and Slavery propagandism, to which I ask the attention of the Senate. By the act of 1807, Congress undertook to regulate the coastwise American slave-trade, and directed in what vessels, and in what manner it should be carried on; thus abetting and protecting a traffic in the people of this country, which, if prosecuted on the coast of Africa, Congress has since declared to be piracy, punishable with death. Can any political casuist tell us how it is that the Government of the United States should allow its own native-born people to be bought up and transported in vessels under its own authority and regulation, to be sold in the slave-markets of the Republic; while, at the same time, it prohibits the buying and shipping of native Africans, under penalty of death? Or why it should hang a man as a pirate for trading in one African savage, and assume to regulate the trade in thousands of American Christians, as they are sometimes represented; thus withdrawing its protection from millions of its own native people, and lavishing it on a barbarous people in a distant land? If it be piracy to steal men from Africa, and sell them in the human shambles, how shall we characterize the stealing of Afro-Virginians, and transporting them under the regulation of United States laws, to be sold in the man-markets of the South and Southwest? We even hear the African slave-trade palliated in a certain quarter as a grand missionary enterprise, by which its poor, benighted victims are translated out of their heathenish darkness, into the marvellous light of the "Model Republic;" but no such plea can be urged in extenuation of the American slave-trade, inasmuch as its victims are snatched from under the blazing light of the slave-breeding States, and doomed to regions less blessed with the beams of the day-star. The trader's profit is the sole consideration, at the expense of the slave's interests and happiness.

In the city of New York, a man now awaits the execution of the sentence of death, pronounced by a United States court, for buying and selling Africans into Slavery. Two citizens of Wisconsin have been condemned to fine and imprisonment, by a United States court, for the alleged crime of helping one American out of Slavery. To steal a man from Africa, and sell him in

Slavery, is piracy, punishable with death; to assist this stolen man to escape from the pirate, or his successors, and regain possession of himself, is a crime, to be expiated by a felon's cell, and a fine of \$1,000. To traffic in the people of Africa is piracy; to trade in the people of this country, even to the selling of white women for the vilest purposes—why, sir, this is entirely innocent and right, *according to law*. Such are the fatuity and villany of human legislation, which courts, conspiring with tyrants against the authority of Heaven, attempt to baptize by the sacred name of law, and teach obedience to its murderous behests! The Government of the United States has virtually authorized and sanctioned this execrable commerce in the people of this country, by interfering to regulate the traffic which annually tears tens of thousands of persons from all that they hold dear on earth, and transports them, to be sold into a strange and weary land. Said Thomas Jefferson Randolph, in a speech to the Legislature of Virginia, in 1832:

"It is a practice, an increasing practice, in parts of Virginia, to rear slaves for market. How can an honorable mind, a patriot, and a lover of his country, bear to see this ancient dominion, rendered illustrious by the noble devotion and patriotism of her sons in the cause of Liberty, converted into one grand menagerie, where men are reared for the market, like oxen for the shambles? Is it better, is it not worse, than the [African] slave-trade—that trade which enlisted the labor of the good and wise of every creed and every clime to abolish it? The trader receives the slave, a stranger in language, aspect, and manners, from the merchant who has brought him from the interior. The ties of father, mother, husband, and child, have all been rent in twain; before he receives him, his soul has become callous. But here, sir, individuals, whom the master has known from infancy, whom he has seen sporting in the innocent gambols of childhood, who have been accustomed to look to him for protection, he tears from the mother's arms, and sells into a strange country, among a strange people, subject to cruel taskmasters. In my opinion, it is much worse."

Said the Synod of Kentucky, in 1825:

"Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, are torn asunder, and permitted to see each other no more. These acts are daily occurring in the midst of us. The shrieks and the agony, often witnessed on such occasions, proclaim, with a trumpet-tongue, the iniquity of our system. There is not a neighborhood where these heart-rending scenes are not displayed. There is not a village or road that does not behold the sad procession of manacled outcasts, whose mournful countenances tell that they are exiled by force from all that their hearts hold dear."

The *Richmond Enquirer*, Virginia, in 1847, held the following language:

"It is a melancholy fact that negroes have become the only reliable staple of the tobacco-growing section of Virginia, the only reliable means of liquidating debts, foreign and domes-

tic. They are sold here by hundreds, under the hammer of the auctioneer. The domestic cannot compete with the Southwestern demand for them, for the plain reason the tobacco-grower cannot make half of one per centum per annum on slave-labor, while the cotton and sugar planters make, perhaps, from fifteen to twenty per centum. Our negroes are going by hundreds, yea, by thousands, to the Southwest."

Although the Census is cautiously silent, and furnishes no statistics relative to this branch of American commerce in Americans, we are able, by much labor, to glean from it certain data, from which we can form some estimate of the probable amount of human exports from the slave-breeding States, and the human imports into the slave-buying States, during the last decennary. We find the average increase of the whole slave population to have been 28.87 per centum. But in Virginia the ratio of increase was but 5.21 per centum; in Maryland 0.07; in North Carolina 17.58; in Delaware, the decrease was 12.09.

What became of the slaves thus disappearing from these States? They were not swept away by pestilence or famine, but by the "soul-drivers," as they are technically called, into Georgia, where the increase was 35.85 per centum; into Missouri, where the increase was 50.10 per centum; into Florida, where it was 52.85 per centum; into Mississippi, where it was 58.74; and into Arkansas, where it was 136.26 per centum.

Mr. GEYER. Let me tell the Senator from Connecticut, that the slaves brought into Missouri are not brought there for sale; we have a law forbidding that; but they are brought by emigrants from other States.

Mr. GILLETTE. Such is the Senator's explanation in relation to his particular State, but it does not explain away the facts which I am stating. The decrease from the old slave States mentioned, goes somewhere to make up the increase in the new.

Mr. DAWSON. The increase being so great shows how well they have been taken care of, fed, and clothed.

Mr. GILLETTE. What does the honorable Senator from Georgia say in relation to the facts appertaining to the old States, which show a large decrease? What does that indicate?

Mr. DAWSON. Simply that they have been taken to the newer States, where the land is better and cheaper, and there are better opportunities for living freely and liberally.

Mr. BUTLER. My friend from Georgia ought to have answered that the process was very much like that in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and other States, where, when they had no further occasion for their slaves, they sold them, and sent them to other places. In some States, years ago, when they had no further use for slaves, they sold the mothers and kept the children.

Mr. GILLETTE. I will only say, in reply to the Senator from South Carolina, that there was in Connecticut a class of slaveholders who sold their slaves; but another and a much more numerous class who emancipated them. As for slave mothers, he knows more about them than I do. But, sir, to return to my argument.

In several of the slave-importing States other than those which I have already mentioned, the increase is much above the average ratio; thus showing a vast domestic slave-trade which numbers many thousands annually. Supposing the natural increase, in the four slave-exporting States mentioned, to be thirty-three per cent., which cannot be too high, considering the mildness of their climate, the lightness of slave labor, and the leniency of slave treatment, compared with the climate, labor, and treatment, endured by the same class in the rice, cotton, and sugar States, in some of which the consumption is reported to exceed the domestic increase, the number of slaves in the four States named should have amounted to 1,050,699; whereas the actual enumeration was but 851,444—thus making the number exported 199,255 between the years 1840 and 1850, which, at \$600 each, would amount to \$119,553,000—the great consideration, after all that has been said to the contrary, for the perpetuation of Slavery in those States.

In this connection, Mr. President, and in conclusion of this topic, I will read a short extract from the speech of the Hon. T. B. Macaulay, delivered in the British Parliament, on the "Sugar Duties." The great name of its author must secure for it the attention of every Senator "who hath ears to hear:"

"Then a new distinction is set up. The United States, it is said, have Slavery; but they have no 'slave-trade. I deny that assertion. I say that the sugar and cotton of the United States are the fruits, not only of Slavery, but of the slave-trade. And I say, further, that if there be on the surface of this earth a country which, before God and man, is more accountable than any other for the misery and degradation of the African race, that country is not Brazil, the produce of which the right honorable baronet excludes, but the United States, the produce of which he proposes to admit on more favorable terms than ever.

"I affirm, then, that there exists in the United States a slave-trade not less odious or demoralizing, nay, I do in my conscience believe, more odious and more demoralizing than that which is carried on between Africa and Brazil. North Carolina and Virginia are to Louisiana and Alabama what Congo is to Rio Janeiro. The slave States of the Union are divided into two classes—the breeding States, where the human beasts of burden increase and multiply, and become strong for labor; and the sugar and cotton States, to which those beasts of burden are sent to be worked to death. To what an extent the traffic in man is carried on, we may learn by comparing the census of 1830 with the census of 1840. North Carolina and Virginia are, as I have said, great breeding States. During the ten years from 1830 to 1840, the slave population of North Carolina was almost stationary. The slave population of Virginia positively decreased. Yet, both in North Carolina and Virginia, propagation was, during those ten years, going on fast. The number of births among the slaves in those States exceeded by hundreds of thousands the number of the deaths. What, then, became of the surplus? Look to the returns from the Southern States,

and from the States whose produce the right honorable baronet proposes to admit with reduced duty or with no duty at all, and you will see. You will find that the increase in the breeding States was barely sufficient to meet the demand of the consuming States. In Louisiana, for example, where we know that the negro population is worn down by cruel toil, and would not, if left to itself, keep up its numbers, there were, in 1830, 107,000 slaves; in 1840, 170,000. In Alabama, the slave population during those ten years much more than doubled; it rose from 117,000 to 253,000. In Mississippi it actually tripled; it rose from 65,000 to 195,000. So much for the extent of this slave-trade. And as to its nature, ask any Englishman who has ever traveled in the Southern States. Jobbers go about from plantation to plantation, looking out for proprietors who are not easy in their circumstances, and who are likely to sell cheap. A black boy is picked up here, and a black girl there. The dearest ties of nature and of marriage are torn asunder as rudely as they were ever torn asunder by any 'slave-captain on the coast of Guinea. A gang of three or four hundred negroes is made up; and then these wretches, handcuffed, fettered, guarded by armed men, are driven southward as you would drive, or, rather, as you would not drive, a herd of oxen to Smithfield, that they may undergo the deadly labor of the sugar mill near the mouth of the Mississippi. A very few years of that labor in that climate suffice to send the stoutest African to his grave. But he can well be spared. While he is fast sinking into premature old age, negro boys in Virginia are growing up as fast into vigorous manhood, to supply the void which cruelty is making in Louisiana. God forbid that I should extenuate the horrors of the slave-trade in any form. But I do think this its worst form. Bad enough it is, that civilized men should sail to an uncivilized quarter of the world where Slavery exists, should there buy wretched barbarians, and should carry them away to labor in a distant land; bad enough. But that a civilized man, a baptized man, a man proud of being a citizen of a free State, a man frequenting a Christian church, should breed slaves for exportation, and, if the whole horrible truth must be told, should even beget slaves for exportation; \* should see children, sometimes his own children, gamboling around him from infancy; should watch their growth; should become familiar with their faces, and should then sell them for \$400 or \$500 a head, and send them to lead in a remote country a life which is a lingering death—a life about which the best thing that can be said is, that it is sure to be

\* Soon after resuming my seat, upon this statement being called in question, I received a note from a stranger in the gallery, stating that "fourteen instances" of fathers selling their own children had fallen under his observation, several of which he knew to members of Congress, and in two of which he himself was the purchaser. On subsequent inquiry, I have learned that the gentleman, who made the communication, was formerly a citizen of a slave State, where he held high judicial position; but is now a resident of a free State, and an advocate of free principles.

‘short. This does, I own, excite a horror exceeding even the horror excited by that slave-trade which is the curse of the African coast. And mark: I am not speaking of any rare case, of any instance of eccentric depravity. I am speaking of a trade as regular as the trade in pigs between Dublin and Liverpool, or as the trade in coals between the Tyne and the Thames.’

As additional proofs of the action of the Federal Government in behalf of Slavery, I might speak further of its tolerance of Slavery in the Territories where, by the Constitution, its jurisdiction is exclusive; of its unconstitutional and barbarous enactments for the rendition of fugitive slaves; of its persevering negotiations with foreign nations for the surrender of, or compensation for, fugitive slaves; of its invasion of Florida to capture absconding slaves; of its interference to prevent emancipation in Cuba; of its duplicity in its sincere attempts to suppress the African slave-trade; of its refusing to acknowledge the independence of Hayti, or receive an ambassador from that Government; of its annexing Texas to extend and strengthen Slavery, as avowed by the leading Southern advocates of that measure; of its invasion of the right of petition; the liberty of the press, and the freedom of speech, on the subject of Slavery; of its admission into the Union of nine new slave States; of its wars of conquest for the acquisition of a vast area of Territory, to be devoted to Slavery; of its recent abrogation of the Missouri compromise; of its admitting the principle of property in man, by granting claims for lost slaves, as was done but two or three days since; and worse, and more revolting even, allowing claims for children of female slaves, that never were born, as was done in 1834 to certain citizens of Georgia, for depredations by Creek Indians, on the principle set forth in the Reports of the Committee thereon, to wit, that “a much higher value is set on a female slave in consequence of an anticipation of increase—a property in expectancy in the issue of such female slave.” [Reports of Committees, first session, Twenty-Third Congress, No. 140.] Thus, sir, the people of the free States were taxed many thousand dollars, by the Government, to pay for slave children which, happily for them, were never created, and lived only in the prolific imagination of the slaveholder engendered there by his cupidity.

“To such base uses” has this Government come at last—thus has it been perverted, debauched, prostituted, by a domineering negro-ocracy, now numbering three hundred and fifty thousand members, and bound together by a monopoly of at least \$1,500,000,000 in human flesh. By this slaveholding oligarchy, this Government has always been controlled and wielded, for the support and extension of Slavery which, the late John Q. Adams truly said, in a speech to his constituents, shortly before his death, “constitutes the very axle around which the administration of your National Government revolves. All its measures of foreign and domestic policy are but radiations from that center.

we are legislating knows no man by his color, creed, or clime. Based on the great principle of natural law, as enunciated in the national declaration—the exact equality of all men in natural rights—it reads: “We the *people*, do ordain and establish this Constitution,” thus emanating from all, and embracing all within its ample scope. The illustrious men who formed it, had not made the profound discovery that human rights depend on complexion, or any other physical peculiarity. They embarked in the revolutionary struggle with the motto emblazoned on their banner—all men are equal in rights; under its inspiration, they conquered, and came out of the contest declaring it to be “the boast and pride of America, that the rights for which she had contended are the rights of human nature.” Deeply imbued with these noble sentiments, they formed the Constitution; and, so far from admitting therein the possibility that man can be made property, they not only discarded the odious term, slave, but went so far as to substitute the term service instead of servitude, it being understood that the former implied the state of Freedom, and the latter the condition of Slavery.

No matter what physical differences may exist among men; no matter whether an African, an Asiatic, a European, or an American sun may have shone upon them; no matter whether the human soul be enshrined in ebony, bronze or ivory, “a man’s a man for a’ that,” equal in rights before God and the Constitution of the country. To deny this is to contradict the spontaneous utterance of human nature herself, and strike at the center column of the temple of Liberty. For how can any man’s liberties be secure, after this fundamental principle is overthrown? That moment we are all at the mercy of the strongest, and might usurps the place of right. Perfect equality of rights, and equal liberty to exercise those rights—such is the organic law of the land; and though rejected and trampled now, it must and will prevail.

“Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;  
The eternal years of God are hers;  
But error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
And dies amid her worshippers.”

In conclusion, Mr. President, I can only deprecate the measure before the Senate, urged as necessary for the enforcement of the Fugitive Act, and designed to complete its supremacy over State authority. No effectual resistance can be made to its passage. The arm of the slave power is again uplifted, and another blow is about to fall upon the liberties of the States, to crush them into Federal absolutism. I bow to what is inevitable by the fiat of a power that knows no forbearance, looking hopefully to a higher Power, to whom our Fathers looked in the day of their calamity, and were signally delivered. I have no threats to fulminate, and but a word of admonition. I caution you not to drive the North to intenser exasperation. Her grievances are already greater than she can bear; do not throw another combustible upon the flame. Desist from your reckless crusade upon her rights; your aggressive war upon her liberties. Having crossed the Rubicon, I warn you to stop and count the cost,

Mr. President: the Constitution under which

before pushing on to capture the last citadel of Freedom.

Constituted as the Senate now is, there can be no reasonable hope of resisting any decree registered here by the dominant power. That power, strongly backed as it is by its Northern minions, is absolute for evil. But, sir, as said the elder Adams, on a memorable occasion, "Great is Truth; great is Liberty; great is Humanity; and they must and will prevail." They who resist their march, whether Senators, Presidents, or Judges, will be scattered like chaff by the breath of the tempest. All the high and holy attributes of Omnipotence are pledged to "break the oppressor in pieces," and pluck the human spoils out of his teeth.

Great changes in public sentiment have occurred within the last twenty years, and greater changes are to come within the next ten years. The booming cannon which celebrated the fall of the Missouri compromise, just north of the Capitol, on the memorable, the "melancholy night" of my induction into this body, also heralded the resurrection of Liberty from her inglorious sleep, and the overthrow of that colossal power that has so long darkened and cursed the land. In the lurid flashes of those cannon it might have read the handwriting of its doom upon these walls, and heard in their roar its echoing dirge. I thank God, the dark night of servility and shame is passing away, and the day-dawn of a regenerated freedom and manliness is shining upon our mountains and hills. Animated, quickened, transported by its cheering rays, I catch and echo the words of one of Freedom's own poets:

"Through all the long dark night of years,  
The people's cry ascendeth,  
And earth is wet with blood and tears,  
But our meek sufferance endeth;  
The few shall not forever sway,  
The many moil in sorrow;  
The powers of hell are strong to-day,  
But Christ shall rise to-morrow.

Though hearts brood o'er the past, our eyes  
With smiling futures glisten!  
For lo! our day bursts up the skies;  
Lean out your souls and listen!  
The world rolls freedom's radiant way,  
And ripens with her sorrow;  
Keep heart! who bear the cross to-day,  
Shall wear the crown to-morrow."

On the conclusion of the foregoing speech, Mr. JONES, of Tennessee, arose, and denounced all the anti-slavery men of the Senate as a "band of traitors;" then, turning to Mr. GILLETTE, said: "Sir, look upon that picture, [pointing to the portrait of Washington, suspended above the President's chair.] I fear you dare not look upon it."

Mr. GILLETTE. Sir, I look that picture fearlessly in the face, and I tell the Senator that the honored man whom it portrays uttered sentiments as hostile to Slavery, as any that I have spoken this night upon the floor of this chamber. He deprecated it with all his heart, and declared, over and over again, that his vote should not be wanting to abolish it. That face, I see, darkly frowns upon the Senator himself for the atrocious sentiments which he is uttering. I am not so

unmindful of the place where I am, nor so lost to self-respect, as to bandy opprobrious epithets with the Senator from Tennessee. He would certainly outdo me in such a rivalry. But I leave it to the country and posterity to say, who are the "traitors"—we who vindicate the principles of Washington and his compatriots, as set forth in the National Declaration and Constitution; or they who denounce them, as "unmeaning abstractions," "sickly sentimentalities," "rhetorical flourishes," "specious lies," and declare human Slavery to be both a Divine and Democratic institution—"the corner stone of Republicanism."

Mr. JONES. Now, I ask that Senator, whether he is sincere in his declaration, that the black man is entitled to equality with the white man, socially or politically? I put that question to the Senator.

Mr. GILLETTE. The Senator from Tennessee, unintentionally, I trust, quotes me but it part, and thus misrepresents me entirely. I did not say the black man is equal to the white man, but endeavored to show, as the reason of his inequality, that the legislation of this Government, and of many of the States, has been wielded to crush him. I did say, that, under God and the Constitution of the United States, all men are equal in natural rights, and have the same indisputable title to the enjoyment of those rights. Such was the purport of what I said, and not, as the Senator quotes me as saying, "that all men in this country are equal."

Mr. JONES. I did not say that; but I mean that this issue shall be fairly met. I put the question now to the Senator: Does he believe that a black man is entitled to an equality of rights, socially and politically, with a white man? That is a plain issue.

Mr. GILLETTE. I thought that I before expressed myself so plainly that every Senator could understand me; I certainly meant to do so. But I will repeat the answer, and say, I do believe, and have the highest authority for the belief, both from Nature and Revelation, that all men are equal in natural rights, of every kind and degree; and have the same equal title to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, irrespective of color, or any other physical peculiarity. I claim for myself no more and no less than I concede to others.

Mr. JONES. This is not answering the question. Natural rights are one thing, and social and political rights are another. But, sir, I will vary the question, and put it in this form: Are you willing that the black man shall participate, equally with the white man, in all the social and political benefits of this country?

Mr. GILLETTE. Mr. President: I certainly am willing, yea, desirous, that all men, irrespective of color, stature, height, circumference, or any other of the accidents of being, should have the same rights and the enjoyment of the same privileges, to work out the great problem of their existence, and to "participate equally" in that social and political equality to which the Senator alludes. I do not know, however, why he questions me so pertinaciously; but I will reiterate the answer to

oblige the Senator, by saying, that I think "*all* men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;" and I am more than willing that they should enjoy all the privileges, immunities, and benefits of society, everywhere, in every department, that I have, or the Senator from Tennessee has. I spurn all aristocracies, and especially a skinny or cutaneous

aristocracy—the meanest of them all; and recognize no title of nobility but that which emanates from the soul, and truly ennobles man by clothing him with the symbols of divinity. With me, socially, politically, morally, character is everything—color, nothing. The negro is no less a man, because he is black; the Anglo-American is no more a man, because he is white.

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